

Morning Health

No SECURITY

Against the

Sudden Arrest

OF

D E A T H

before NIGHT.

A

S E R M O N

Occasioned

By the very sudden DEATH of Two
young Gentlemen in *Boston*, on *Satur-*
day January 14th, 1726, 7.

Dedicated to the YOUTH of the Town.

By THOMAS PRINCE, M. A.
And one of the Pastors of the South Church.

Jam. iv. 14.

*For what is your Life? — It is even a Vapour,
that appeareth for a little time, and then vanish-
eth away.*

BOSTON : Printed. for *Daniel Henchman*,
and Sold at his Shop, over against the
Brick Meeting House in Cornhill. 1727.



DEDICATION.

To the Youth of the Town of Boston.

THE Subject of the following Sermon affecting You in an especial manner, nothing can be more proper than to present it to your Service.

WHEN I Pen'd it, I had not the least Tho't of making it more Publick than the delivering it in my own Auditory. Upon which account there are those Inaccuracies in it, which I have no time now to mend, as were enough to make me very averse at first to it's Publication. But the Representations of others, that by the Seasonableness of it, while your Minds are awakened with the late awful Instances of sudden Death among you, * the Discourse may be more likely to do you good; have overcome my Backwardness & made me willing to undergo any Censures for your Benefit.

NO doubt the Sight, and Rumour of these surprizing Instances, as it quickly run through the Town, did at first affect you with a lively Apprehension of your own exceeding Frailty & impending Danger, the desperate Venture of trusting to your Lives a Day, and the infinite Importance of being always ready to appear before the Great & dreadful G O D.

BUT alas! The Allurements of this deceitful World do presently divert our Minds: These Apprehensions quickly wear off again: We soon return to our former Carelessness and Security; tho' the same awful Hazard still continues: and thus our hopeful Impressions prove but as the morning Cloud, and as the early Dew, that quickly vanishes away.

TO keep you therefore from Returning to such a Frame of Spirit; to preserve alive the Apprehensions of your own Danger; to make you sensible there is the same Reason for you to be continually apprehensive of it as much as

* On January 14th Mr. Samuel Hirst, Æt. 22. and Mr. Thomas Lewis, Æt. 32. Besides these 2 that were the Occasion of the Sermon, a 3d falls out this very Day, a Fortnight after, viz. Mr. Simon Bradstreet, Æt. 20.

DEDICATION.

when the lively Instances appear'd before your Eyes ; and so to quicken you to a suitable Conduct ; is the Design of Publishing the following Sermon.

AND now, The great Request I have to make, and which is indeed the Summary of every other, and the Purport of my whole Discourse, is this, — That you wou'd every Morning as you awake and rise in Health, consider seriously that you may be in the very Case of those Two young Gentlemen, whom you so lately saw, in the midst of seeming Health, drop down & Die.

IF you wou'd but every Morning spend a Thought in so just & wise a Reflection ; it would be most likely, thro' the Grace of GOD, to save you from many Sins & Follies, and excite you so to Live as to be always ready for such a sudden Change.

NOR will such a Course as this be any Hindrance to your solid Chearfulness or Pleasure. For if every Morning you do sincerely Give up your selves to GOD in CHRIST, and then endeavour by his Help to please Him thro' the Day ; you'l have a constant spring of Serenity & Chearfulness in you : there are a thousand lawful Pleasures you may freely take — Take them, and be thankful to the bounteous Giver : while you moderately pursue the World, with the Esteem of others, you will be approved of GOD, and make sure of Heaven. You will find that this is the Path of Wisdom, Safety, Peace & Pleasantness : and if it should be your Lot to Die at once, it will only without any previous Terror, more easily & quickly usher you into a Life of endless Happiness.

THAT this may be the blessed Use & Issue of this Discourse, in Conjunction with these awful & never to be forgotten Providences, is the earnest Prayer of

*Boston, January
28th 1726, 7.*

Your Friend & Servant,

T. Prince.



Morning Health no Security against the
sudden Arrest of DEATH, before Night.

LORD'S DAY Morning, *January 22.*

P S A L. XC. 5, 6.

*IN the Morning they are like Grass which
groweth up : in the Morning it flourisheth
and groweth up, in the Evening it is cut
down and withereth.*

BY the *Title*, this Psalm appears to be a Prayer
to GOD, compos'd by *Moses* in the Wilder-
ness for the Use of *Israel*: and by the general
strain it seems to have been composed towards
the End of their Journyings there. For after
he had therein drawn a most affecting Scene of
those numerous Instances of human Frailty, Mortality
and Affliction which had pass'd among them; He to-
wards the Close lifts up his Heart in an hopeful Prayer,
That GOD wou'd now return in a way of special Fa-
vour, satisfy them early with his Mercy, and make
them glad according to the Days wherein He had af-
flicted them & the Years wherein they had seen Evil.

TO

TO comfort & support Himself and that afflicted People in the sad Review of those Destructions which had been made among them; he first raises up his Mind and begins the Psalm with the Contemplation of GOD's own *Eternity*, and of his being their Dwelling Place in all Generations; and then in the Description of their Calamities, he begins with GOD as the sovereign Cause, he represents them as the Fruits of his holy Displeasure, and then he traces out their Sins as the sad Procurers.

BUT tho' the Psalm is written with a special view to the Mortalities & Sorrows of that afflicted People; yet there are scarce any others here described but what are common to the rest of Men.

AND here *Moses*, in the 1st place, speaks of our universal Mortality & Dissolution, ascribing them to the Efficiency of GOD; *ver. 3. Thou turnest Man to Destruction.* The last Word strictly signifies to be *bruised & broke to pieces.* (p.) i. e. By Bruising & Breaking his brittle Frame & Constitution, Thou dost grind & rend him into Pieces: or, Thou breakest him to pieces as a Potter's Vessel. (n) *And sayst Return ye Children of Men.* In the Hebrew 'tis ye Children of *Adam.* i. e. Return—Your Bodies to the Earth, from whence they came; and your Spirits to GOD who gave them. *Gen. 3. 19. Psal. 146. 4. Eccl. 12. 7. (a)*

2. HE then describes the Irresistibility of this Destruction; in the beginning of the 5th ver. *Thou carriest them away as with a Flood.* i. e. Thou overwhelmest and barest them away as irresistibly & easily as a Flood of Water breaks out & carries away all before it (d). Death under the Divine Direction, is a sort of an *invisible Deluge*, (c) that sweeps away all before it, and none can resist or avoid.

p. Pagnin, Mercer. &c. n. Nicholson. a. Answ.
d. Dutch Annot. c. Calv. in Loc.

3. THAT

3. THAT Insensibility we are by this Destruction bro't to; in the middle of the same Verse. *They are as a Sleep.* i. e. As Men falling & fallen into a deep Sleep, so Thou carriest them away, and so they Die. Like a Sleep imperceptibly, so Death seizes on them: and having seiz'd them, deprives them of their sensitive Powers; and they lie like Men asleep, insensible of their own Condition and of every thing about them.

4. THE unexpected & surprizing Suddenness of their Destruction; as in our Text. *In the Morning they are like Grass which groweth up: In the Morning it flourisheth & groweth up, in the Evening it is cut down and withereth.*

THIS similitude may be taken either from some tender sort of Herbs, that very suddenly fade away: tho' they flourish in the Morning, yet being heated by the Sun at Noon, their Juice evaporates and they quickly wither. Or rather from the cutting down of the flourishing Grass by the hand of the Mower. (m)

IN the Morning, i. e.

(i.) IN their Infancy or Youth, in the morning of their Age. (g) *They are like Grass,* or as an Herb, as all the ancient Versions render it. (b) *That groweth up,* or *changeth* or *passeth*, as the Original may signify, and several translate it. (b) i. e. Like the springing Grass or Herb they rise, and quickly altering, they grow in sprightliness & Beauty. *In the Morning it flourisheth & groweth up.* Being sprouted out of the Earth, it becomes more fresh & flourishing: It shooteth out with a pleasant Flower: It grows in Strength and Stature, and hastens on towards it's Perfection. So the Children of Men, in the Morning of Life, they flourish and grow like the Grass or tender Herb that has not felt the Meridian Sun: But *in the Evening it is cut down & withereth.* Tho' it be fresh in the Morning, yet by too sudden & intense an Heat, it soon changes, flags & falls down to the Earth, (j): Or by the Scyth

m. Moller. g. Gej, &c. in Pol. Synops. b. Bib. Polyglot
& Pol. Synops. j. Jackson.

of the Mower, it is suddenly cut down and withereth away.

IT signifies the hasty & sudden Change of the Sons of Men to Destruction: They are scarcely Born & risen, but they are quickly cut down & perish. (d) The space of Humane Life may be here compar'd to a *single Day*. The Birth & Youth of Men is like the Morning, and their Death is like the Night or Evening. And the Sense may be, — That many die in the Prime of their Age, like a tender Herb that cannot bear the least Heat of the Sun; and other Young Ones Live to flourish, but by the Noon of Life they pass away. (m.)

(2.) THE Morning here may not only signify the Morn of Life, or our Youthful Age, but also in a more Literal sense, the very Morning of an *Artificial Day*. In this respect we may be like the Grass or Herb that in the Morning flourisheth & groweth up: But in the Evening of the *same Day* may be cut down & withered. And as this is applicable to every Age of Life, I shall in this sense also, as well as the other, consider it, under this General

D O C T R I N E,

T H A T tho' in the Morning of the Day we may be growing up & flourishing as the Grass; yet in the Evening, whether we are Elder or Younger, we may be cut down & withered.

FOR Illustration I shall endeavour these three Things,

1. TO describe something of the Condition here signified, when we are growing & flourishing as the Grass in the Morning.
2. SHOW that for all this, whether we are Elder or Younger, we may in the Evening be cut down and withered.
3. & Lastly, THE affecting Change & State we are then reduced to, when we are actually cut down and withered.

I. *TO describe something of the Condition here signified; when we are growing & flourishing as the Grass in the Morning.*

THE Similitude being taken from the *Grass* or *Herb* of the Field; I might here run out into a great Variety of Instances to show how fitly we may be compared to it. Especially since the inspired Scriptures do several times make use of this apt Allusion.* But I shall confine my self to this single Instance of it's *flourishing State* in the Prime of the Day.

SEE then the Grass & Herbs in the Morning, being refresh'd with Dew, replenish'd with Moisture & enlivened with the rising Light of the Sun; How fresh & gay they appear! They spring so fast as we are ready to think we see them grow. They Change indeed at first as they quickly pass to further Degrees of Eminence: They grow in Thickness, Strength & Stature: They branch out their verdant Leaves, display their beauteous Flowers and hastily aspire to their full Perfection. Then we see them flourishing in all their Verdure, Strength & Flowers, briskly waving in the fluent Air, and showing all the Signs of Life, Prosperity & Continuance.

AND this may give us some Resemblance of our flourishing Morning State: especially in our young and growing Age.

AND this is when we awake & arise in Health, Strength & Vigour. When we not only appear with a lively, hail & chearful Countenance; but this arises from the sense of Ease within, the Fulness of our Spirits, and the Freedom of their Operations.

WHEN our Constitutions being unbroken, the Vessels whole & open, and the Fluids free & regular in their Circulations thro' them. There's no sense of Pain, Uneasiness or Disorder: But an inward Pleasure running in every Vein of the Body, and a secret Exultation rising

Psal. 103. 15. *Isa.* 40. 6, 7, 8. *1 Pet.* 1. 24.

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in the Soul from the joyous Sentiments of a universal State of Tranquility & Health within us.

THEN we flourish as the Grass. And this is still more eminent in the Morning, after a sufficient & refreshing Sleep in the Night. Having taken our full and pleasant Rest, and Slept in Ease & Quiet, we find our Spirits then replenished & renew'd with Vigour : The Soul & Body seem to be in a perfect Harmony together : There's no Complaint between them : no suspicion of any Danger of their parting quickly : nothing but a mutual Joy & Satisfaction. The Soul is pleas'd to find the Body fit & ready for all it's Desires & Purposes : and the Body pleas'd and active in the Execution of them.

IN the Womb of the Morning we have the Dew of our Youth. Then the Mind is full of Strength & Vigour : The Spirits play with Pleasure : the Soul delighted with it's present Mansion, and in the fair & undoubted Prospect of it's long Continuance. The young Man then rejoices in his Youth & Health ; the out-goings of the Morning are joyful to him : As a Bridegroom he comes out of his Chamber ; and rejoices as a strong Man to run a Race.

THIS is some brief Description of the State here signify'd when we flourish in the Morning like the Grass.

AND now, how exceeding ready are we to glory in our morning Health & Strength, and to depend & trust to the long Continuance. We can't tell how to think that in Evening we may be cut down & withered : and we cou'd scarce suppose it possible in Nature, were we not convinced of it by repeated & known Examples.

WE therefore now proceed in the

II Place, *TO show that yet for all this, whether we are Elder or Younger, we may in the Evening be cut down and withered.*

i. e. NOTWITHSTANDING the flourishing State of the morning Health we have been describing, we are thro'out the Day expos'd to be suddenly cut down by the stroke of Death, and all our Vigour, Strength and Beauty faded : and in the Evening this may be our Portion.

NOW that in the midst of Health & Pleasure, we are continually expos'd to this, and that this may be our Case at Night, appears both from *Observation* and the *Knowledge of Nature*, as well as from the *Holy Scriptures*.

FOR this has been the Case of multitudes of others : and it has been an ancient, plain & universal Maxim among the Sons of Men, That, *what has been may be*. There is nothing known in Nature to secure us from the same sudden Destruction.

WE spring & rise from the same Original : We are compos'd of the same various & dissolvable Principles : We are configured & formed after the same Model : supported by the same corruptible & fleeting Aliments : subjected to the same Laws of Nature : surrounded with and breath in the same changeable & noxious Air : and therefore Live in the same natural Dangers, and are expos'd to the same quick & surprizing Dissolution.

AND if yet we rise to *higher Causes*, there is still the same awful & continual Hazard.

FOR we are all equally in the Hands of the Great GOD, the sovereign Ruler & Upholder of the World. * He has justly condemn'd us all to die for our original and joint Rebellion against Him : and doubtless he takes Care to see his righteous Sentence executed. He also sees every Personal Iniquity both in the Commission, Purpose and allowed Inclination : and is infinitely offended with it. And as He has continual Provocation, so He has Power enough with the greatest Ease to strike & cut us down in a moment when ever He pleases.

* *Psal.* 103. 19. *Dan.* 4. 35. *Col.* 1. 17. *Heb.* 1. 3.

HE has likewise all natural Causes both material and spiritual under his actual & absolute Direction. He can employ his mighty Angels to destroy us in an invifible manner at once: and as they excel in strength, fo they rejoice to do his will. * Or without them He does whatever He pleases, and nothing can interrupt or hinder Him. † Yea GOD upholds us in Life every moment, as much as a Man holds up a Stone from falling down to the Ground: and He need not strike us, He need only withhold his vital Influence from us, and we immediately die & sink and return to the Earth to which we are inclin'd, and from whence we came. In fine, we continually provoke Him to this, and are therefore always exposed to such a quick Destruction,

OUR most flourishing Morning Health & Vigour will no more therefore secure us from being cut down in the Evening, than the Flourishing of the sprightly Grass in all it's morning Strength & Beauty. Thro'out the Day we are in continual Danger of being cut down on a sudden by the irresistible stroke of GOD, either immediately by his own Efficiency in an invifible manner, or thro' the Agency of natural Causes, or by the mere withholding his vital & supporting Influence from us.

I say, *Cut down on a sudden*: For this no doubt is signified by this allusive Expression. For the cutting down of the Grass—How quick & instantaneous is it! It is done at once, in the Hight of all it's Flourish & Verdure. And thus are many of the Sons of Men cut down at once in the midst of their Health & Pleasure. *As the Fishes that are taken in an evil Net, and as the Birds that are caught in the snare; so are the Sons of Men snared in an evil time when it falleth suddenly upon them,* Ecch. 9. 12.

TO this are we every Moment of the Day exposed, and in the Evening may unexpectedly prove to be cut down & withered.

* Psal. 103. 20. † Dan. 4. 35.

AND as this is a General Truth comprehensive of us all; it therefore includes both Elder & Younger of every Age: and as the above mentioned Causes of Danger are common, They equally show that no sort of Age is any Security from such a sudden Destruction.

BUT inasmuch as it may more fully convince us, or at least more sensibly move us, it may be convenient here to descend to Particulars.

AND,

1. THE *Elder Ones* that are flourishing in the Morning as Grass, may yet in the Evening be cut down and withered.

IN the *Elder Ones*, their Lives, their Health, their Strength & Vigour, are in a great measure sensibly wasted away. Their Constitutions of Body are either broken or wounded: and their Lives on this account in more apparent Hazard. The Wrinkles of their Skin, the loose Texture of their Flesh, and the Coldness of their external Parts do show, the vital Powers are decayed in them, and unable now to create & send their usual supplies of Heat and Nourishment. And their various Vessels having been extended to their utmost Limits, they have thereby lost their springy Tenor & Strength, incline to relax, and so their Powers of acting, which are the Powers of Nature, are failing and in a measure gone already. From this Relaxation rises faint, unequal & irregular Actions on their inclosed Fluids: and what numerous Dangers these produce — I must leave the *Physicians* to say.

I shall now only cite you to that lively Description of this State of the Body which the inspired Solomon gives us, in Eccl. 12. 3, 6. Now *the Keepers of the House*, i. e. the Head & Hands begin to tremble: *the strong Men*, i. e. the Legs & Shoulders to bow themselves; *the Grinders*, i. e. the Teeth, to cease to do their office, because they are few: and those that look out of the windows, i. e. the Eyes, to be darkned. Now, the *Silver Cord*, i. e. the whole System of Nerves, whereby all the Instruments of Life are moved, they begin to be loosened: and now you must expect that the *Golden Bowl*, i. e. the Vessel that contains the

the Brain; the Pitcher at the Fountain, i. e. the Heart; and the Wheel at the Cistern, i. e. the Lungs; that these, i. e. their Contextures & Powers will be quickly broken: they will lose their moving drawing & distributing Virtue; and so Blood & Spirits, and Heat & Sense & Motion will all fail in the Body: (j.) And then this curious Arrangement of finer Dust shall return to the Earth, in which it lay dispers'd, and from whence it was but a little while since collected.

FROM these Considerations we may see something of the especial Hazard of the *Elder Ones* among us, that are in the Morning flourishing as Grass, their especial Hazard of being cut down in the Evening & withered.

BUT the *Elder Persons* have so often seen such Instances of this, that there's lesser need of showing them their Particular Danger. They are the *Younger Ones* that are much more hardly to be convinced: that can't tell how to think of being suddenly cut down by Death, while they are flourishing in Health & Joy, and in the Morning of their Lives.

TO these including the strongest, healthiest & most unbroken Constitutions, I shall therefore now apply myself & show

2. THAT even the *Younger Ones*, that are in the Morning flourishing as Grass, may in the Evening also be cut down & withered.

AND have you not known *Instances* enough of this already, to convince you fully of your continual Danger?

HOW many in their Youthful Days have lost their Lives at once by Drowning, Falling, Shooting, by a Flash of Lightning, and by numberless other Accidents?

AND how many others — by an unaccountable, unexpected & sudden Change in their own Bodies? In the

midst of seeming Health and Pleasure, they have been at once bereaved of Sense, and have fallen down breathless on the Ground. To mention now no other than *the double awful Instances in one Day, in the same Street, in the most publick Part of the Town, & near the same Hour, about a Week ago.* How flourishing were they in Health and Ease in the Morning of that fatal Day: but in the Evening we saw them cut down & withered. In the same seeming State of Health as any of you now: and could no more think of being cut down in the Evening than the liveliest among you.

AND are not these *double Instances* shocking to you, shocking to your vain Confidence, and enough to make you sensible how exceeding Frail the healthiest of you are: and tho' now this Morning you are flourishing in Health and Cheerfulness, yet in the Evening of this very Day, you may like them be cut down & withered.

AND this you wou'd still be more clearly convinc'd of, if you cou'd but know *your own inward Frame & Constitution.* If you cou'd but see the very slender Threads your Lives are constantly depending on; you would be amaz'd, you would be affrighted at your continual Danger; and greatly wonder how it comes to pass that you have escaped ten thousand sudden Deaths already.

THE Blood & Vapours are continually ascending into the *Brain*: and if they should rise too fast or in too great a Force or Quantity, as they may by numberless Causes, you are in the utmost Danger: If they should get out of their tender Vessels there, or by swelling them press on the more vital Parts adjoining, so as to obstruct their Motions, you are gone in a Moment. If a Cold, a Cramp, a sharp or a glutinous Humour should seize some of the necessary Springs of Life; the Course of Nature stops immediately, and you die without a Remedy. If some exceeding fine and tender Threads or Skins, which are in continual Action, shou'd break within you, you are destroy'd at once without Recovery. If by any sort of inward Surprize or Passion, or outward Impression from the cold ambient Air, or other

C

numerous

numerous Causes, the perspirable Matter or any other Humours shou'd suddenly strike inwards, & bare so much on the chief Instruments of vital Motions as to overpower & stop them; you are kill'd as suddenly, as if you were struck thro' the Heart with a Bullet.

YEA this very *Heart* of yours — it continually Labours, tho' you feel nothing of it, with an amazing Force to beat the Blood along it's Vessels & keep you alive. * And if it cease to move a few Minutes, you presently expire & die for all the Art of Man to save you. But by the greatest Philosophers this amazing *Action* of the Heart is found to rise, not merely from it's own Construction or the mechanick Powers of Nature; but is even mov'd continually by some invisible and mighty Agent, which no doubt is GOD himself. They are convinc'd it is *not the Soul* that moves it: For the Soul knows nothing of it, and it moves & acts with the same amazing Force when the Soul is at the greatest Rest & Ease in the Time of Sleep, and when it is most unmindful of the Body and most attentive on external Objects, as when we are awake and have nothing to divert us. The Heart thus moves continually whether the Soul will have it or no: the Heart goes on and regards it not: and the Soul can neither hinder nor continue one single Action of the Heart a moment. It has no more Command of the Heart within us, either to stop or move it, than of the Heart of another.

IN short it is no less than the Omnipresent & Almighty GOD that has it in his immediate Hands and moves it for us. And thus they find *those Scriptures* to be true in the strictest sense. Job 12. 10. *In whose Hand is the Soul, (or Life as 'tis in the Margin) of every living Thing, and the Breath of all Mankind.* Psal. 136. 9.

* It is found to send the Blood out of it with the Swiftmess of above 50 Foot in a Minute, and with a Power of above 3000 Pound weight, which is vastly more than the whole Body can raise directly from the Ground. And yet this Power has more than 40 times greater a Resistance to overcome in sending the Stream of Blood into the Arteries.

Which

Which holdeth our Soul in Life : and Acts 17. 28. For in Him we live & move & have our Being. And now, if the Great & dreadful GOD, whom you provoke by your Sins continually, should cease to move this wonderful Machine of Life, you die immediately & wither away.

IN these respects are we very *fearfully* as well as *wonderfully made* * and preserved. And I might instance in a great many other dangerous Circumstances of your mortal Bodies, that are almost infinitely frailer than you can conceive. But methinks, this is enough to show you, that tho' in the Morning you are flourishing as Grass, yet in the Evening you may be cut down by Death & withered.

WE therefore go on in the

III and last place, to *Consider briefly the affecting Change and State we are then reduc'd to, when like the Grass we are actually cut down & withered.*

NOW the Part of the *Grass* or *Herb* cut down, in that very moment looses all it's Life & vital Power. It immediately falls & lies prostrate on the Ground. The Circulation of it's Juices now are stopt. It has no strength to draw in any Nourishment, to put forth any pleasant Flowers, or to wave in the Air any more, And it quickly *withers* also. It looses all it's Sprightlinefs & lively Colours : They presently die & fade away. It soon grows pale & wan, till it turns to a more Earthy Hue, and then to Rottenness. And as the watry Parts expire, it yet withers more, *i. e.* It shrinks and wasts away to Dust.

AND to such a piteous Case as this are we reduced, when like the Grass, we are cut down & withered.

BEING cut down by the stroke of Death, our Liveliness & Strength are at once entirely vanished. Like the Grass it self we fall down to the Earth, from whence

* *Psal.* 139. 14.

we sprang. As we are become insensible, so likewise utterly passive to all about us. We are moved hither and thither, and disposed of just as they please. The pleasant Looks and the beauteous Colours, they presently Change and fade away. The white and ruddy Countenance grows wan and ghastly. The Corpse soon turns to an Earthy Hue, like the dirty Elements of which it is formed. The Comeliness quickly turns to Corruption : and as the Moisture constantly evaporates, it withers more, and consumes to Dust.

THIS is the low, the abased State, which like the Grass of the Earth we come to, when we are cut down and withered. Surely then, *the People is Grass : and all the Goodliness thereof is as the Flower of the Field : the Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth ; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.* As for Man, his Days are as Grass : as a Flower of the Field so he flourisheth : For the wind passeth over it and it is gone ; and the Place thereof shall know it no more.†*

BUT Oh — What is now become of that *separate Spirit*, which once in such a wonderful manner enlivened, beautified, rul'd & acted this curious & compounded Frame of Dust & Water! Here we must leave the Parallel between Grass & Man, which can hold no further ; and search for that restless nobler Part, than ever either Plants or Brutal Animals possess'd : whose State at Death is of infinitely greater moment for us to contemplate & know, than that of our withered and mouldering Bodies.

THESE Parts of ours, *our Souls* — they never die, nor wither away : But they continue still the same for their Substance, Natures & Powers for ever, and in the same moral Condition for Kind tho' not in Degree, as they were in when they dwelt in the Body. Then the Eternal Sentence of GOD is pronounced upon them — *Hine that is Holy, let him be Holy still ; and He that is Filthy let him be Filthy still.*

* Isa 40. 6 — 8. † Psal. 103. 15, 16.

THEN, *the Soul* being released from the Body, is releas'd from all it's Laws & Influence. It subsists distinct in all it's essential Powers & Vigours. It is awakened then from the insensible stupor of Death with which it was overwhelm'd for a moment while GOD was dissolving it's vital Tie with the Body. And then it returns to the Presence of God who gave it.* It returns to GOD as it's Omniscient, holy & impartial Judge: It appears before his Seat to be tryed, and to be determined of for ever.

THERE every thing appears naked & open before the Eyes of Him with whom we have to do. The Profaneness, Hypocrisy & secret Enmity of the *Unrenewed* to GOD, cannot be concealed: but they'll appear in the most open Light to their utter Confusion. And there the Repentance, Faith & Love of the *Upright* towards Him, will break out & appear in all their Lustre, to their inexpressible Joy & Confidence in Him. Our *several States* will immediately discover themselves: the Tryal upon them will therefore quickly be over: and then comes on the definitive, irrepeatable Sentence: either to be bound & reserved with Devils in chains of Darkness to the Judgment of the Great Day and the Publick Tryal of all the Things we have done in the Body: † or else to be acquitted, justified & made perfectly Holy thro' CHRIST, to pass into his delightful Presence, and there to remain till the Resurrection of it's precious Dust to an immortal State of Life & Beauty.

AND now, *In what manner are these various Spirits employed in their separate State?*

WHY — The *Condemned* are fill'd & tormented with most dismal Apprehensions & Horrors. They have a most awful View of the glorious Holiness, Justice, Omniscience & Power of GOD. Being conscious of their inexcusable Guilt, they reflect on the daring Sins they have committed against Him, and then they look on

* Eccl. 12. 7. † 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20. 2 Pet. 2. 4, — 6.
Jude 6, 7.

forward to their endless & amazing Punishment. With the Devils they believe it & tremble. They know there remains no more Sacrifice of Sins for them, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment & fiery Indignation from GOD, to devour them his implacable Enemies. With the condemned Ghosts of *Sodom & Gomorra*, they have in their own Minds a most terrible Sense of suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire. And with further Horrors they dread the Resurrection of their vile Bodies to compleat their Misery.

BUT on the other hand, the *justified & sanctified* Spirits — they enter into that perfect & eternal Rest that remains for the People of GOD. And there they are forever free & secure both from Sin, Temptation, Fear and Suffering. They rejoice exceedingly that they are safely got thro' the dark Passage of Death. They triumph in the pleasing Reviews of their momentary Tryals on Earth, their Perseverance thro' them, their Victories over them, and in the certain Prospect of that far more exceeding & eternal weight of Glory which they have been working for them. They are happy in the Presence of GOD, in the Vision of CHRIST, and in the delightful Society of numberless Angels & other perfected Spirits, who most dearly love them & rejoice in their Happiness. In fine, They are glad they are delivered out of the Prisons of their vile & sinful Bodies: and they joy in the Prospect of their glorious Resurrection in the Perfection of Beauty & Holiness, and with immortal Life & Vigour, to partake of their new found Pleasures & compleat their Felicity: To be transported together to the celestial Paradise, never to be cut down or fade any more, but to grow & flourish in their Perfection forever.

THESE are the various affecting *Consequences* of our being cut down by Death & withered. And thus have we seen some faint *Illustration* of this important *Doctrine*. We must now Conclude with some

IMPROVEMENT

I M P R O V E M E N T.

AND,

I. *WHEN* we flourish in the Morning as Grass, let us then remember our Grass-like Constitution & be greatly humble.

HOW apt are the strong to glory in their Strength, the healthy in their Health, the sprightly in their Vigour, and the comely in their Comeliness. The superficial Apprehensions of these corporeal Indowments, elate our Minds with self-Conceit & Pride. But let us get a deeper View of our real Frame & Composition; and we shall see enough to check this Vanity, and that we have no such reason as we fondly imagine, to boast or glory.

FOR what is all this bodily Frame & Complexion, but a mere Contexture of Dust & Water? It came but lately out of the Ground we tread on; and thither, as to its native Soil, it will quickly return again. Yea the very Filth & Ordure of the Streets — we may easily think of what vile Ingredients 'tis composed — It is carefully carried into our Fields & Gardens: There it either descends in Roots, or rises into Grain or Herbs, or Grass & Flowers: It soon comes into our hungry Bodies, turns into Blood & Flesh & vital Spirits, and forms our Strength & Beauty.

AND what is Strength, but a more close Cohesion of the dusty Parts? and what is Beauty, but such a Rangement of them in the Skin, as to reflect some peculiar Rays of Light or Colours to the Eyes as please the Fancy? What is Health, but the earthen Vessels not being broken or distorted, and the Thinness of the Fluids rolling thro' them? and what is Vigour, but a greater Plenty of a thinner or more springy sort of matter moving easily & swiftly in us?

IN short, The Substance is all the same in one as in another, Vile & Earthy. In the Streets 'tis Filth and putrefaction: In the Grass it flourishes: In the living Face it shows the beautiful Colours of Light reflecting from

from it : and in a little while it withers, and turns to a more loathsome Putrefaction than it was before.

WELL may we therefore own in a literal Sense with *Job* in great abasement, * *I have said to Corruption, Thou art my Father : To the Worm, Thou art my Mother and my Sister : and where is now my Hope ? And where is now our Pride ? We shall go down to the Bars of the Pit and rest together in the Dust.* We shall go down and rest together : i. e. My Father, Mother, Sister, Corruption, Worms & We together. For as an Instance that we are in a measure in a State of Putrefaction already ; the very healthiest of us have always Millions of those vile Creatures swarming in our Flesh & Blood : They constantly Live in & upon us: and as we Live together, so we shall die and go down into the Pit together, only they will a little out-live us, and there dissolve & rest together in the Dust.

2. *WHAT Cause have we to admire GOD's distinguishing Power & Goodness in our continual Preservation.*

THE Union of Soul & Body and the Continuance of it can be ascribed to nothing but his immediate and continual Influence. But the strength of the Soul is limited : and this noble & active Part is, in it's present State at least, unable to move all the mighty Engines of Life in the Body : and they must be moved continually, or we die in a moment. In a few Hours Action of the Limbs by Labour, or of the Mind by Study ; the Soul grows weary of moving them, and requires to rest. But the vital Instruments in us must incessantly Labour with an exquisite Nicety, and an Exertion of Force abundantly greater ; and the mover of them must never forget, must never be weary. The mighty & unfainting Power of GOD does therefore here come in to Support us : and thus He keeps us in an immediate and perpetual Dependance upon Him.

* *Job* 17. 14.

WITHOUT

WITHOUT *one moment's Intermision*, He is continually putting forth his wonderful Power, to move the necessary Springs of Life, to repair our wasting Substance, and to preserve us alive. While He thus inwardly sustains & moves us, He defends us from Millions of Evils that wou'd easily & quickly destroy us: And all this He has been constantly doing from the very moment that He began to form us.

HOW devoutly shou'd we admire this *wonderous Work* of His in thus upholding the tender Life He has given us! and this in the midst of such numerous Dangers & Enemies to it, both from without and within, by his mighty and never ceasing Influence and protection. Let us have a Care of ascribing this to the mere *Powers of Nature*: But let us rightfully yield Him the Glory of his immediate Work in his constant upholding & moving, as well as original forming & quickning these earthy Bodies. In the grateful Sense of this, with the excellent *Job*, let us acknowledge to GOD—** Thy Hands have made me & fashioned me together round about: Thou hast clothed me with Skin & Fleesh, and hast fenced me with Bones & Sinews: Thou hast granted me Life & Favour, and thy Visitation has preserved my Spirit.*

IN fine, LET us also admire his *distinguishing Goodness* that he He shou'd do all this for us, while our Lives have been so vain and fruitless of Good, yea so much abused to his Dishonour: and while numberless Multitudes have passed away; and many cut down as the chaff, with a sudden Destruction. And let us never be guilty of such a vile Ingratitude, such a vile Persecution of GOD's kind and continual Operation in us and for us; as to employ it against Him in Acts of Unthankfulness or Drunkenness, or any other kinds of Wickedness, so extremely contrary to his most pure & excellent Nature.

3. *WHAT reason have we to be greatly afraid of sinning against the glorious GOD, our continual Upholder.*

** Job 10, 8, — 12.*

D

SINCE

SINCE we thereby run the desperate Venture of provoking Him to cease his supporting Influence, and let us die in an *Instant*: that we may no longer abuse his Power & Goodness, but be called to a strict Account and punished for it.

HOW great & fearful is the *continual Hazard* of every Sinner! How aggravated are your Sins, and how high your Provocations! While the Blessed GOD has been unceasingly working to support this brittle Frame of Life, you have employ'd the Fruits of his immediate Influence in you, to the Gratification of your filthy Lusts and his extream Displeasure. While He has been working to create & supply you with Nourishment, Health and vital Spirits; you have been vilely perverting them to the foulest Actions. And thus as He expresses Himself — || *Thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, Thou hast wearied me with thine Iniquities.*

HOW extreamly dangerous then must be your Condition! How can you expect that GOD shou'd any longer exert his mighty Power to support you in your detestable Courses? To recruit you with Strength, that you may be strong to Sin? and to supply you with Vigour, that you may be more violent in it?

AND since you have wearied Him with your Iniquities; what reason have you to fear, that if you will venture to provoke Him again, his abused Patience may end at once, and that dreadful *Threatning* be fulfilled upon you — † *Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word and trust in Deceit (v) and Perverseness, and stay thereon therefore this Iniquity shall be to you as a Breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall; whose Breaking cometh suddenly at an Instant: and he shall break it as the Potter's Vessel, that is broken in Pieces: He shall not spare.*

|| Isa. 43. 24. † Isa. 30. 12, — 14. (v) So Chald. Sept, Arab, in Bib Polyglot, Tremel, & Eng Marg.

THIS O daring Sinner is your fearful Doom : This may be your speedy & unexpected Portion : Of such a sudden stroke are you in continual Danger.

AND now, *When you are about to Sin*, CONSIDER, — “ Now GOD Himself is working in me: He is now upholding me: He is now supplying me with Blood, Strength & Spirits: And shall I now wickedly pervert his Operation in me to worse than brutish Actions! Shall I make the glorious GOD subserve my filthy Lusts! What can be more shocking, horrid and provoking? And what a desperate Venture do I run of being now deserted by his vital Influence, which I am going most profanely to abuse & prostitute? Especially when I have been so often warned of this dreadful Danger, both by his Word & Providence? and GOD himself has declar'd * *He that being often reprov'd, hardneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed; and that without Remedy.*

O Consider these things : and Sin if you dare — Sin if you can.

4. *HOW foolish, mad & sottish are we to depend and trust to so uncertain & frail a Life.*

ALAS ! Is any thing more evident than that the most of us do so ? and don't we all experience upon the least Reflection, that we are extreamly inclined to this ? Even the elder & more *unhealthy* Persons, that feel the Symptoms of Mortality in them ; are yet apt to please themselves in the groundless Confidence of living sometime longer. How much more prone are they to depend on Life, who are in the Bloom of *Youth*, or in the *Verdure* and *Strength* of Age ? Who is there in this great Assembly that does not trust upon his being alive to *Morrow* ?

EVEN the *best* of Men are very subject to this vain Presumption : and thereby indulge themselves in the neglect of many precious Opportunities they would else improve for the Glory of GOD and the Good of

* Prov. 29. 1.

the World. But how greatly do they fail in their Wisdom ; to depend on that they know is not to be depended on, but is absolutely uncertain to them ?

BUT Oh ! How inexpressibly greater is the Folly and Madness of *impenitent Sinners* !

IN the midst of infinite Hazards, they trust to the Strength & Vigour of Nature which they know may fail in a moment. And how amazing is this — that reasonable & foreseeing Creatures shou'd thus continually run, without any need, the most desperate & apparent Venture of dropping into endless Ruin ! Everlasting Misery must be your unavoidable Portion ; unless your Natures and Lives are renewed, and you heartily turn from all your Sins, and receive and submit to CHRIST as your Prince and Saviour. But this you find is exceeding hard and difficult : and yet you presumptuously persuade yourselves, it may be easily done when you come to Die, that the time is a great way off, and that then you will have Leisure enough : tho' you likewise know there is not any Certainty of it ; but that this all a most dangerous Cheat you put on your selves, and there can be no Dependance on these things you promise.

HOW self-evident & great is our destroying Folly ! We have the most awful Admonitions of Providence again & again repeated, in the surprizing Deaths of others : and yet alas ! we go on with the same stupidity as millions have gone before us ; till we also find ourselves irretrievably deceived at last, and are made as awful, but neglected Warnings to those that follow. Oh the wonderful Sottishness of the Sons of Men ! *They are destroyed from morning to evening : they perish for ever, without any regarding it. — They die without wisdom* *. Yea, *The Heart of the Sons of Men is full of Evil : and Madness is in their Heart while they live, till they go down to the Dead.* † :

5. **W H A T** reason have we then to live continually in the Expectation or Supposition at least, of so sudden a Change.

* Job 4. 20, 21. † Eccl. 9. 3.

OUR Danger of this, being so very great & constant ; there is the utmost reason to live in the continual Sense of it : as much reason to live in the same *habitual* Apprehension of Danger as we had in our Minds upon the most awakening Instances ; or as they had reason to to have, the very Morning before they fell down and died. Our Hazard being always as great as we apprehended it then to be ; and as far as we know, as great as theirs the very moment they were cut down and withered.

LET us then always be sensible that we are hastily passing thro' an evil World, that is ever full of Change & Hazard : and what an exceeding frail & tender Composition are these mortal Bodies : These *Houses of Clay* we dwell in, as *Job* describes them ; *whose Foundation is in the Dust, which are crushed before the Moth* — as quickly & easily crushed & broken to pieces, as that frailest of Insects, by a thousand Accidents.

O then let us have a Care of falling into such a vain Security, as ever to think our selves out of Danger of the sudden Seizure of Death : and so indulge our selves in any Sin, the neglect of any Duty, or give a loose to any Vanity that may make us unfit to Die. In our most joyful State of Health & Prosperity, when we are ready to say with the vain rich Man in *Luk. 12. 19. Soul, — Take thine ease, eat, drink & be merry* — Let us then be aware of the moving Admonition our Blessed SAVIOUR gives us in the following Verse — *But Oh God said to Him, Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of Thee!*

IN the Morning of every Day and before we leave our Chambers ; Let us then consider what a speedy Death our outward Hazards, our inward Frailties, our continual Dependance on GOD for Life, our Sins against Him and his Displeasure with us, expose us to. That this may be the last Morning we shall ever see : The last Opportunity we may have of Praying or Devoting our selves to our Great Preserver. That some unexpected outward Accident, or sudden Turn within may befall us, in the midst of our Diversion or Business, when we least look for it ; which may bereave us of Sense at once,

once, and not give a moments Warning to cry — *Lord have Mercy*, or to employ one Thought to prepare for Eternity. In the Hight of seeming Health & Jollity, We may be snatched away in an Instant, and appear with Surprize & Trembling before the Throne of GOD. And there our carnal Mirth & Pleasures will look like ancient Dreams; but that we may find our selves to be most miserably deluded by them to our irrecoverable & endless Ruin.

LET us carry the same Supposition with us throw-out the Day. And then consider the wisest Methods both for our present Ease & Chearfulness, and our Eternal Safety.

6. & lastly, *WHAT need we then be diligent in Improving our uncertain Time, that we may be certainly prepared for so sudden & momentous a Change.*

OUR Lives being so extream Uncertain, and upon their expiring the Judgment immediately following, when our State shall be determined for ever; of what vast Importance is it, that we apply our selves to make a certain Preparation for it? This must needs be the greatest Concern of all. It is impossible that any other Affair of Life shou'd stand in Competition with it. One moment's Entrance into Eternity will convince us fully of this. All other Matters -- Riches, Honours, Pleasures, Crowns and Empires, are mere Dreams & Trifles in Comparifon: For if we shou'd be snatch'd away *Unready*; there is no Recovery — We are Undone for ever.

IN particular,

(1.) *WHAT need we get immediately into a Readiness for so surprizing an Hour.*

DEATH & Hell are open before us, eternal Destruction has no covering, and now may be the only Season we may have to escape them. To morrow, yea to night may be too late for ever. Yea you may Die within an Hour or Minute, for all your present Health & Confidence. And then, O then, *What will be the State of your immortal Souls?* — How extreamly dangerous is the least Delay?

O then let these things quicken you to get immediately into a Readiness for so great a Change as may be
just

just upon you. O! venture not to put this matter off an Hour, a Moment: since your Eternal Safety may be now depending on your improving the present Season; and if you don't, you may be lost for ever.

NOW therefore, Harken to the Calls of GOD, & no longer dare to harden your Hearts thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin. Now is the only certain accepted Time: and Now, if you Improve it, is the certain happy Day, the Hour of your Eternal Salvation. Now if you will hear the Voice of GOD; Hear it, and your Souls shall live.

BUT what shall we Do, that we may be quickly Ready?

FOR this, I wou'd say the same things to you: as if you had but 2 or 3 minutes to prepare for Eternity.

NOW then freely yield to all the glaring Light, Convictions & Perswasions of the Holy Spirit: Follow them diligently, & neglect them no longer. Now mightily cry to GOD thro' his Son, to Renew, to Sanctify, to enable you to Repent & Believe, and then to Forgive & Save you. Now do your utmost to Renounce all your Sins, without the least Reserve: And to receive, submit to and rely on CHRIST, as He is offered to you in all his glorious Offices of Prophet, Priest & King; that He may be your perfect Saviour. Now, Give up your selves entirely to GOD, the Father, Son & Holy Ghost, in an everlasting Covenant; To be possessed & governed by Him, and to honour & enjoy Him for ever, as your highest End & Happiness. In fine, Do all this in deep Humility, with all your Hearts, and in Faith of GOD's accepting you for the sake of his Son, and according to his gracious Word: and then humbly Look for the Mercy of our Lord JESUS CHRIST unto Eternal Life.

BUT then——

(2.) *WHAT need we also live in a continual Readiness.*

THE Danger of Death & Judgment-being continual; here is the most equal Reason to live in a continual Preparation for them: To live in the constant Views of that eternal World, we are suspending over by the frailest threads, as really as if we saw it with our bodily Eyes: and to live every Day, as it wou'd become us were it to prove, as it may, the very last of our Lives?

BUT

BUT how shall we do so?

TO this, I Answer — Having renounced our Sins, believed in CHRIST, and devoted our selves to GOD, as above; Let us then apply our selves, thro' the Grace of CHRIST to live agreeable to such a sincere Dedication.

LET us always make the Glory of GOD our highest Design, his Will our sovereign Rule, his Service our principal Business. Let us always be watchful against every Sin & Snare. Let us ever be studying & attending our incumbent Duties. Denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts; let us live soberly, righteously & piously in this evil World. Let us always exercise our selves in this, to keep Consciences void of Offence, both towards GOD & Man. Let us have a Care our Hearts be not overcharged with Eating, Drinking, or any other sensual Pleasures or Cares of Life; least that awful Hour shou'd come upon us unawares. Let us be moderate in our Affections, Pursuits, Enjoyments of Earthly things: While we are necessarily concern'd & pleased with them; let us keep our Hearts above them, and have our higher Aims & more delightful Views in Heaven.

TO Conclude, **LET** us all be diligent in Redeeming our flying & uncertain Moments: Doing Honour to the Blessed GOD, serving our Generation according to his Will, working out our own Salvation, abounding in every Grace & Duty: And tho' we may not come up fully to such a Life as this; yet let every Failing humble & excite us to be more careful, and to repair afresh to CHRIST for Pardon & Grace to help for Time to come. And Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when He calls, shall find so Doing. *Wherefore, Brethren, Give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure: For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an Entrance shall be ministred to you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ — To whom be Glory Now & forever: AMEN.*

6 AP64

F I N I S.

